

*Massachusetts Urban Forestry Program*

# The Citizen Forester

**December, 2007 No. 120**

This month's lead article by Jared Liu of Alliance for Community Trees points out both the need for and potential of partnering with non-profit and corporate sponsors to tackle the problem of canopy loss in communities. Whether it is on a national scale like ACT or on a more local scale such partnerships are helping to putting the Community in our Urban and Community Forests.

## **Alliance for Community Trees**

### **National NeighborWoods Month**

By Jared Liu

National NeighborWoods Month was created by the Alliance for Community Trees (ACT) to celebrate the benefits of trees in the places people live. Having local organizations participate in NeighborWoods Month helps us show the cumulative effect of a burgeoning urban and community forestry movement. Trees are not just a local concern but a national one as well. In addition, participating organizations benefit from professionally designed campaign materials to support their local events and mini-grants to boost their media impact.

This year there were 232 re-greening, educational, and training efforts in 62 cities promoted during NeighborWoods Month by the Alliance for Community Trees.

NeighborWoods Month is sponsored through a generous grant from The Home Depot Foundation. By partnering with ACT, The Home Depot, and local NeighborWoods organizations, we are able to further The Foundation's goals of investing in the overall health and success of our communities. The Home Depot Foundation is dedicated to creating healthy, livable communities through the integration of affordable housing built responsibly and the preservation and restoration of community trees. Since its formation, The Home Depot Foundation has granted more than \$50 million to nonprofit and government organizations throughout North America. In 2006 alone, projects supported by the foundation built 9,000 units of housing and planted 300,000 trees.

Membership in ACT is open to all urban forestry organizations whose programs engage the public in the planting, care, and/or appreciation of community trees. ACT also offers Associate Membership to public agencies, businesses and others who wish to participate in our mission and Individual Membership to citizen advocates who wish to support this critical work.

One of the simplest and most rewarding benefits of ACT is the networking you will experience as a member. ACT member groups share their best ideas, most successful programs, and their hard-learned lessons with each other- creating a peer community that is a source of strength to nonprofit and city tree organizations.

Another benefit of ACT membership is the strength of our unified voice in national public policy issues affecting urban forests. ACT provides legislative tracking services to our members and generates action alerts to help members defend federal programs that support urban forests. Coalition-based advocacy is more important than ever as the USDA Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Program faces its fifth year of budget cuts- a negative trend that is hurting communities in every state.

In the long term, the Alliance for Community Trees is achieving financial growth for our members by working to secure national level sponsors. In 2005, ACT launched its National Neighborhoods Program™, which has provided \$660,000 in grant assistance to ACT member groups to support community forestry projects in underserved neighborhoods, in partnership with The Home Depot Foundation.

ACT provides its members with ongoing technical support through publications, our outstanding electronic newsletter, and research services. ACT tracks media stories, funding opportunities, and the latest academic research and packages it for our members to save you time and connect you to resources that support your mission. Partnership and collaboration are the motivating principles upon which ACT was founded. Our member groups work together to make a bigger impact for communities. This alliance continues to generate returns for ACT members.

ACT invites you to help protect America's urban forests by joining the federation of 140 member organizations in 39 states. Together, ACT member organizations have planted 7.8 million trees in communities nationwide, with help from 450,000 volunteers.

For membership information, contact Jared Liu at [jared@actrees.org](mailto:jared@actrees.org) or 301-277-0041 or <http://neighborwoodsmoth.org>

## **Picks and Shovels**

### **For more related information**

[http://actrees.org/files/Get\\_Involved/ACT\\_Membership.pdf](http://actrees.org/files/Get_Involved/ACT_Membership.pdf) ACT is a membership association who's independent, community-based members are planting, preserving and maintaining the tree canopies of all major metro markets and many towns in between.

[www.homedepotfoundation.org](http://www.homedepotfoundation.org) The Home Depot Foundation invests in communities across the country to help home owners of modest means.

[www.treelink.org](http://www.treelink.org) Tree Link's mission is to improve urban and community forests by providing Internet-bases information, tools and inspiration.

## Growing Greener

The Town of Topsfield is proposing to use its National Grid Partnership Grant to undertake an initiative to educate the public about the importance of preserving the urban forest, and enforcing laws that will help manage and protect their public shade trees. The grant will fund the reformation of the Topsfield Tree Planning Committee and the community projects it plans to undertake. The projects include: developing local tree care ordinances, striving for Tree City USA designation, and starting a tree inventory for the town. These will become the foundation of a long-term public awareness campaign the Topsfield Tree Planning Committee intends to implement over time.

## Growing on Trees

**Awards of Excellence for Community Trees** The Home Depot Foundation, in partnership with the U.S. Conference of Mayors, is proud to announce the opening of the application period for the Third Annual Awards of Excellence for Community Trees. [www.homedepotfoundation.org/awards\\_trees\\_apply.html](http://www.homedepotfoundation.org/awards_trees_apply.html)

**Northeast Community Tree Guide** Provides the benefits, costs, and outline for strategic plantings with hypothetical examples of planting projects to described and illustrate how the data in this guide can be adapted to local uses, and guidelines for maximizing benefits and reducing costs. [www.fs.fed.us/psw/publications/documents/psw\\_gtr202](http://www.fs.fed.us/psw/publications/documents/psw_gtr202)

**Community Forest Report** The Trust for Public Land, the Northern Forest Center, and the Quebec-Labrador Foundation/Atlantic Center for the Environment report is based on findings from research on the potential role of community ownership and management of forestland that included GIS analysis, interviews, surveys, input from two workshops, and five case studies of Community Forests in northern New England that illuminate particular aspects of the Community Forest Model. [www.tpl.org/tier3\\_cd.cfm?content\\_item\\_id=21809&folder\\_id=209](http://www.tpl.org/tier3_cd.cfm?content_item_id=21809&folder_id=209)

## On The Horizon

**Tree City USA Applications are due December 31, 2007** it's time to compile your community's information and apply for TCUSA. Whether your community is applying for the first time, for recertification or for a growth award you must have them post marked by 12/31/07. For more information visit National Arbor Day Foundation [www.arborday.org/programs/treecityapplication.cfm](http://www.arborday.org/programs/treecityapplication.cfm) or The "DCR Urban & Community Forestry Program" website at: <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/forestry/urban/urbanFAQs.htm#treeCity>

### **Environmentally Sound Practices and Products for Managing Trees and Shrubs.**

This workshop series offered by UMass Extension is designed to educate landscape professionals on the fundamentals of managing trees and shrubs in the landscape. The first of ten workshops is Winter Botany on December 13, 2007 followed by Tree and

Shrub Insect ID Lab on January 9<sup>th</sup> and Tree and Shrub Disease ID Lab January 16<sup>th</sup>. For complete list of workshops and registration information visit [www.umassgreeninfo.org](http://www.umassgreeninfo.org) or contact UMass Extension at 413-545-0895

### **Northeastern Urban Research Organizational Network (NEURON)**

Second annual meeting will be held this January 8<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> at Boston College. Representatives from NGOs, universities, schools and local state or federal-level agencies and municipalities interested in urban forest are encouraged to participate. This year's theme is Urban Long Term Research Areas (ULTRAs): Developing Platforms and a Network for Discovery. For more information contact Jess Schmierer, the Environmental Studies Coordinator at Boston College, for additional information: 617-552-2477 or [neuron@bc.edu](mailto:neuron@bc.edu)

### **95<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Massachusetts Tree Wardens & Foresters**

**Association** Hosted at the Host Hotel in Sturbridge, MA. January 8-9, 2008. For more information visit <http://masstreewardens.org/Conference.html>

### **2008 National Conference on Urban Ecosystems** Nature and the Network: Building a new framework for people and nature to work together May 28 - 30, 2008

Caribe Royal Hotel Orlando, Florida. Organized by American Forests the Conference will bring together members of the business, government and conservation communities, to solidify and expand partnerships, assess our progress and plan strategies for building communities of the future. [www.americanforests.org/conference](http://www.americanforests.org/conference)

## **Species Spotlight**

*Fagus grandifolia*

**American Beech**

**Hardiness Zone 4**

**Edible Tree Fruit** yes see special section below

**General Description:** This deciduous tree is Native to Eastern North America from New Brunswick to Florida and grows 50' – 70' tall. When grown in the open its spread can become almost twice its height forming a broad low crown with branches that often touch the ground where they may root layer back into the soil. The leaf arrangement is alternate and simple being serrate and dark green above and light green below where they are glabrous with tufts of hair in the axils of the veins and along midrib with 11 – 15 vein pairs. In autumn leaves turn a bright bronze color and will remain on the tree into winter. Flowers are monoecious forming in April or early May and of no ornamental importance. Tree fruit is a three winged nut enclosed in a spiky involucre found in twos or threes and persist on the tree into winter. The bark is smooth and light gray taking on a wrinkled appearance as it ages.



**Culture:** Prefers moist well drained acid soils and full sun does poorly in excessively wet soils. Root system is shallow and wide spreading, transplant during dormant season and prune in early summer or early fall.

**Landscape Use:** As a specimen tree in large open areas such as golf courses and parks or to naturalize areas.

**Liabilities:** Shallow rooting habit that grows close to the soil surface and tends to sucker heavily when disturbed. Fruit can be a maintenance problem and due to dense shade can be difficult to grow grass under. Powdery mildew and aphids are a minor pest problems but a growing threat to the survivability of the American Beech in the forests of the Northeast is beech bark disease

**Cultivars/Varieties:** None

For more information, see [www.hort.uconn.edu/plants/j/jugnig/jugnig1.html](http://www.hort.uconn.edu/plants/j/jugnig/jugnig1.html)

**Edible Tree Fruit:** is provided by Russ Cohen of the Mass Riverways Program, he is a professional environmentalist and wild foods enthusiast. To find out more about edible plants check out the following links. <http://users.rcn.com/eatwild/recipes.htm> ,

Beech Nuts are edible (albeit small and difficult to collect in quantity). Each beech nut husk is about the same size and shape as a lemon lozenge (but with a brown “burr-y” (but not prickly) outside. Each husk contains a pair of pyramid-shaped shells which in turn contain a small amount of nut meat with a flavor resembling cocoanut. The husk stays closed until the nuts are ripe; then the husk splits open and the nuts fall out. Beech trees that grow in the open produce the best nut crops. I have heard that the most effective way to gather them is to wait until a frosty night in late September, spread blankets or tarps under the tree, and then send an agile friend or family member up into the tree to shake the branches and encourage the nuts to fall on the tarps.

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**If you have a topic or addition to the Citizen Forester newsletter, please let us know.**

**If you have questions about Urban and Community Forestry, contact:**

**Eric Seaborn**, Coordinator [eric.seaborn@state.ma.us](mailto:eric.seaborn@state.ma.us)



**Alan Snow** Community Forester, Western Mass  
[alan.snow@state.ma.us](mailto:alan.snow@state.ma.us)



**Bureau of Forestry**  
**Department of Conservation and Recreation**  
251 Causeway Street, Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02114

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